

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

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Public Workshops Scheduled to Begin MLPA Initiative South Coast Project

SACRAMENTO – Workshops are scheduled this month and next to introduce the public to the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative's South Coast Project. The overall goals of the workshops are to orient people to the MLPA Initiative process, specifically in the MLPA South Coast Study Region (state waters from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County south to the California border with Mexico, including offshore islands), generate nominations for a regional stakeholder group, invite questions, and solicit input on the process.

"Our goal is to help the state conserve marine life and habitat by designing a network of marine protected areas along the entire coast of California in order to restore a healthy ocean ecosystem," said Susan Golding, chair of a task force overseeing the planning process. "The public's participation is vital to our ability to do this successfully."

The workshops will use an "open house" format where attendees may choose to visit at any time during the three hours and walk through a number of informational stations. Key information stations include an overview of the MLPA Initiative process and timeline; the status of marine protected areas in California; and how the public can get involved. Staff will be available at each station so that attendees may ask questions and provide feedback.

The first series of workshops are scheduled for:

- **Santa Barbara on Monday, June 23, 2008:** Louise Lowry Davis Recreation Center, 1232 De La Vina St., 805-897-2568
- **Oxnard on Tuesday, June 24, 2008:** South Oxnard Center, 200 E. Bard Road (located next to the South Oxnard Branch Library), 805-385-8362
- **Santa Monica on Wednesday, June 25, 2008:** Ken Edwards Center, 1527 Fourth St., 310-458-8300.

A second set of workshops are scheduled for:

- **Huntington Beach on Tuesday, July 8, 2008:** Huntington Beach Harbor View Club House, 16600 Saybrook Lane, 714-536-5486
- **Carlsbad on Wednesday, July 9:** Hilton Garden Inn, 6450 Carlsbad Boulevard, 760-476-0800
- **San Diego on Thursday, July 10:** Holiday Inn Express Old Town, 3900 Old Town Boulevard, 619-299-7400.

All workshop times are 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

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“The next phase of the MLPA Initiative will again afford many opportunities for public involvement, which begins with this series of workshops from Santa Barbara to San Diego,” said Executive Director Ken Wiseman. “We’re excited to continue moving forward using an ongoing, transparent, dynamic public process, continually integrating the lessons we learn along the way.”

The MLPA Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to help the State of California implement the MLPA, which was enacted in 1999. The MLPA directs the state to reexamine and redesign California’s system of marine protected areas (MPAs) with the goal of increasing its coherence and effectiveness at protecting the state’s marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities in marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbance. MPAs are discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat.

A regional approach is being used in the MLPA Initiative process, where California’s 1,100-mile coastline has been divided into five study regions. In September of 2007, regulations for the first of the five study regions were implemented for the central coast (Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County). In the second study region, four proposals for redesigning MPAs in the north central coast (Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County) were presented on Wednesday, June 11 to the California Fish and Game Commission at a special meeting in Sacramento. North central coast regulations are expected to be adopted by the commission by the end of the year.

While the commission considers north central coast MPAs, the MLPA Initiative is moving to the south coast study region. After the south coast planning process is completed, the north coast process will begin (Alder Creek north to the California border with Oregon), followed by the San Francisco Bay process (from the Golden Gate Bridge northeast to the Carquinez Bridge). A specific timetable for the remaining study regions has yet to be established.

A blue ribbon task force is overseeing the process and near the end of 2009 will make a final recommendation regarding south coast MPA proposals to the commission.

For additional information about the MLPA Initiative, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.

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